

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 125840 TOSEC 020132

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, VS, TW

SUBJECT: TRAVEL OF FORMER PRESIDENT THIEU, PM KHIEM
AND FAMILY-- ACTION MEMORANDUM (S/S NO. 7510989)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM EAGLEBURGER

1. THE PROBLEM:

EMBASSY TAIPEI STATES THAT THIEU NOW DESIRES TO COME
TO THE US PERMANENTLY. HE REPORTEDLY INTENDS TO DELAY HIS
ARRIVAL IN THE US UNTIL THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IS MORE
FAVORABLE. KHIEM AND A FAIRLY SIZEABLE GROUP ARE WITH
THIEU. THIEU HOPES HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER CAN PRECEDE HIM
TO THE US TO JOIN THEIR DAUGHTER IN PITTSBURGH, PROBABLY
IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE. KHIEM APPARENTLY IS NOT CON-
SIDERING A DELAY, BUT WE DO NOT HAVE HIS TRAVEL PLANS.

2. THE EMBASSY ASKS WHETHER MRS. THIEU AND DAUGHTER CAN
ENTER THE UNITED STATES AHEAD OF THIEU. I ALSO BELIEVE
WE SHOULD GIVE THE EMBASSY FIRM GUIDANCE ON HOW WE WOULD
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LOOK AT THIEU'S AND KHIEM'S TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES

AT THIS TIME.

3. CLEARLY, IT IS HIGHLY PREFERABLE THAT THIEU DELAY ANY ARRIVAL IN THE U.S. THIS PROBABLY HOLDS TRUE FOR KHIEM AND THE MAJOR FIGURES IN THEIR ENTOURAGE AS WELL.

4. THREE OPTIONS OCCUR:

A. WE COULD GENTLY POINT OUT TO THIEU AND KHIEM THAT WE BELIEVE THEIR ARRIVAL SHOULD BE DELAYED FOR SEVERAL MONTHS (WE HAVE ALREADY COMMUNICATED THIS MESSAGE TO THIEU'S PARTY), THOUGH WE WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THEIR FAMILIES PRECEDING THEM TO THE UNITED STATES.

B. WE COULD INFORM THIEU AND KHIEM THAT THEY SHOULD DELAY TRAVEL TO THE US, INDICATING THAT IT WOULD CLEARLY BE IN THEIR OWN INTERESTS TO THINK OF AN INDEFINITE STAY IN TAIPEI. WHILE MRS. THIEU AND DAUGHTER MAY ALSO WISH TO CONSIDER DELAYING DEPARTURE FOR THE US IN ORDER TO AVOID CONTROVERSEY AND POSSIBLE HARASSMENT, THE DECISION TO TRAVEL IS UP TO HER.

C. WE COULD INFORM THIEU AND KHIEM THAT WE BELIEVE IT IS INADVISABLE FOR THEM OR THEIR FAMILIES TO TRAVEL TO THE US AT THIS TIME AND THAT IT WOULD CLEARLY BE IN THEIR OWN INTERESTS TO THINK OF AN INDEFINITE STAY IN TAIPEI.

5. DISCUSSION:

EA AND IATF AGREE THAT THIEU AND KHIEM, BUT ESPECIALLY THIEU, SHOULD NOT COME TO THE UNITED STATES AT THIS TIME BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL CONTROVERSEY IT WOULD CREATE. IN ADDITION, THE IATF BELIEVES THEIR ARRIVAL WOULD GRAVELY UNDERMINE PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE RESETTLEMENT EFFORT. I CONCUR WITH THIS ASSESSMENT. THE TRAVEL OF THEIR FAMILIES, OR PARTS OF THEIR FAMILIES, TO THE UNITED STATES IS SOMEWHAT MORE MARGINAL, THOUGH THEIR ARRIVAL WOULD CREATE UNDESIRABLE PUBLIC ATTENTION. IF THEY WERE TO PRECEDE THEIR PRINCIPALS, THIS WOULD ALSO HAVE THE EFFECT OF MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT TO DISCOURAGE THIEU AND KHIEM FROM ENTERING THE US AT A LATER STAGE, EVEN IF WE WERE TO CONTINUE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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BELIEVE IT UNWISE.

6. THE US OF COURSE HAS A MORAL OBLIGATION TO THIEU AND HIS ENTOURAGE. YOU STATED AT YOUR PRESS CONFERENCE OF APRIL 29 IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION THAT "IF PRESIDENT THIEU SHOULD SEEK ASYLUM IN THE US, HE WOULD BE, OF COURSE, RECEIVED." THE ISSUE AT THIS POINT IS HOW ACTIVELY WE SHOULD DISCOURAGE THIEU AND KEY MEMBERS OF

HIS PARTY FROM COMING TO THE US NOW AND WHAT TIME FRAME WE SHOULD CONVEY FOR THEIR CONTINUED STAY IN TAIPEI. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD TAKE A STRONG POSITION ALONG THE LINES OF OPTION (C), WHILE NOTING THAT THIS SHOULD BE RECONSIDERED ONCE THE POLITICAL CLIMATE BECOMES MORE SETTLED AND THE REFUGEE PROGRAM IS FULLY ON COURSE. IATF AGREES. EA WOULD PREFER OPTION (B).

7. RECOMMENDATION:

A. GENTLY SUGGEST TO THIEU AND KHIEM THAT THEY DELAY FOR SEVERAL MONTHS; POSE NO OBJECTION TO FAMILIES PRECEEDING THEM.

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B. TELL THIEU AND KHIEM TO DELAY INDEFINITELY WITH DECISION ON TRAVEL OF FAMILY LEFT UP TO MRS. THIEU.

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C. TELL THIEU AND KHIEM WE THINK IT INADVISABLE FOR THEM OR THEIR FAMILIES TO TRAVEL TO THE US AT THIS TIME.

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8. PLEASE ADVISE.

9. CLEARED: IATF, MCMANAWAY; EA, R.MILLER, AND EAGLEBURGER. INGERSOLL

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